

REMARKS

Applicants submit this Amendment in reply to the Office Action mailed January 25, 2006.

By this Amendment, Applicants amend claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 15-18, 20-22, and 30 and cancels claims 3 and 25-29 without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 2-14 and 20-30 have been withdrawn from consideration by the Examiner. The originally-filed specification, drawings, and claims fully support the amendments to claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 15-18, 20-22, and 30. No new matter has been introduced.

Claims 1-30 are pending in this application. Claims 1 and 30 are the sole independent claims.

On page 2 of the Office Action, claims 1 and 15-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. In light of the Applicants' amendments to the claims, it is respectfully requested that this rejection be removed. No new matter has been added.

On page 3 of the Office Action, claims 1, 15, 16, 18, and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication 2003/0168796 A1 to Suzuki et al. ("Suzuki"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Suzuki, however, fails to render independent claim 1, as amended, unpatentable for several reasons. For instance, independent claim 1 recites a combination of structures that include, among other things:

- a single-sheet processing machine selectively attached to the image forming body and configured to attach another postprocessing unit at a

downstream side, wherein the single-sheet processing machine has a plurality of mechanisms including a punching unit configured to punch sheets in units of a sheet, a folding unit configured to fold sheets in units of a sheet, a perforator configured to perforate sheets in units of a sheet, and a cutter configured to cut sheets in units of a sheet, and

- the single-sheet processing machine includes a sheet attachment unit configured to attach a cover sheet or an insert sheet to an output sheet bulk.

Suzuki discloses a sheet processing apparatus including a sheet processing portion and a sheet conveying portion. Suzuki also discloses a plurality of sheet conveying units disposed in parallel in a rearrangeable manner. See Suzuki at pp. 2-3, paragraph [0036]. Suzuki, however, fails to disclose or suggest the structure of:

- a single-sheet processing machine selectively attached to the image forming body and configured to attach another postprocessing unit at a downstream side, wherein the single-sheet processing machine has a plurality of mechanisms including a punching unit configured to punch sheets in units of a sheet, a folding unit configured to fold sheets in units of a sheet, a perforator configured to perforate sheets in units of a sheet, and a cutter configured to cut sheets in units of a sheet, and
- the single-sheet processing machine includes a sheet attachment unit configured to attach a cover sheet or an insert sheet to an output sheet bulk.

Suzuki, thus cannot anticipate independent claim 1, as required by 35 U.S.C. § 102.

For at least these reasons, independent claim 1 is allowable over the prior art of record. Moreover, claims 15-19 each depend upon independent claim 1 and are therefore allowable for at least the same reasons that independent claim 1 is allowable. In addition, at least some of the dependent claims recite unique combinations that are neither taught nor suggested by the cited reference, and therefore at least some are also separately patentable.

In light of the foregoing remarks, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 15, 16, 18, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Suzuki is respectfully requested.

On page 4 of the Office Action, claim 17 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suzuki in view of the Japanese Patent Application No. 2002/003069A to Kato et al. ("Kato"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Kato does not remedy the aforementioned deficiencies of the rejection under Section 102(e) in view of Suzuki. Applicants respectfully request that the Section 103(a) rejection be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims 1 and 15-19.

The Office Action contains characterizations of the claims and the related art with which Applicants do not necessarily agree. Unless expressly noted otherwise, Applicants decline to subscribe to any statement or characterization in the Office Action.

In discussing the specification, claims, or drawings in this Amendment, it is to be understood that Applicants are in no way intending to limit the scope of the claims to

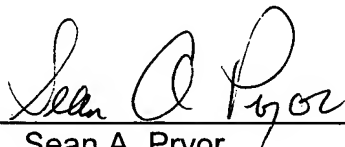
any exemplary embodiments described in the specification and/or shown in the drawings. Rather, Applicants are entitled to have the claims interpreted broadly, to the maximum extent permitted by statute, regulation, and applicable case law.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW,
GARRETT & DUNNER, L.L.P.

Dated: April 25, 2006

By: 
Sean A. Pryor
Reg. No. 48,103